

WHEN YOUR CHILD REFUSES TO EAT

You cook and when you put the food in front of your child, you hear “Yuck!” Your child refuses to eat. This happens a lot, especially between 2 and 4. Before you get mad, think about this for a minute:

Why Is Your Child Refusing To Eat?

- Maybe they are too tired.
- Maybe they are sick.
- Maybe they want to show that they have some control over something.
- Maybe they know they will get cookies in a half hour.
- Maybe they want to find out if you will make them something better.
- Maybe they had a snack, had a drink or sipped on the bottle. Now they are not hungry.
- Maybe they like how much you fuss over them when they don't eat.
- Maybe they are not hungry.
- When growth slows down, a child eats less.

Relax!

The best thing for you to do is stay calm. Your child may just like seeing you get worried. So **pretend** you are relaxed about it, even if you aren't! If you put pressure on your child to eat, things will get even worse.

Also, you can...

Ask Yourself These Questions

- Is my child actually HUNGRY at mealtime? Are snacks or drinks cutting my child's appetite?
- Is mealtime pleasant? Or am I putting a lot of pressure on my child to eat?
- Does my child eat well for other people? Why are we having this problem? Should I relax more about it?
- Am I taking this personally? Do I feel like my child is saying “No!” to me?
- Am I expecting my child to eat more than he/she really needs?

Don't Try To Make Your Child Eat

Maybe you think it's part of your job to make your child eat. It's not. It's your job to give healthy foods at regular meals and snacks. It's your **child's** job to eat it or not!

Ask the dietitian or nurse to help you figure out how to deal with this problem. They can tell you if your child is getting enough food to grow well.

Good Luck!



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